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PORTER

Vehicle arson spurs \$6,000 in rewards

A Porter woman found her car in flames at 2:08 a.m. Wednesday in front of her home in the 900 block of Park Avenue.

According to the police report, footprints showed that one person parked on a nearby street and walked to the 1993 Honda two-door car. No one was injured. Police are investigating the arson.

A \$1,000 Crime Stoppers award is offered; call Porter Police at 926-7611 or Crime Stoppers at (800) 342-7867. An additional reward of up to \$5,000 is available from the Indiana State Fire Marshal; call (800) 382-4628.

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State Legislators Consider Bill that Makes Flood Victims Rebuilding Process Easier

Updated: Feb 18, 2008 07:08 PM EST

State legislators are considering a bill that would make it easier for flood victims to rebuild their homes. The bill, sponsored by Senator Brandt Hershman, has made it through both the House and Senate and could become law within a few weeks.

Senator Hershman said right now Indiana law states that homes in a floodway with more than fifty percent damage cannot be rebuilt. This bill would allow people to rebuild in a floodway regardless of the amount of damage. "It would allow people who are in a flood zone to rebuild in their current location if they move their residence two feet above the one hundred year flood plain," said Senator Hershman.

Carroll County Emergency Management Director Dave McDowell said he knows many homeowners, including himself, whose homes suffered more than fifty percent damage last month and are waiting to hear what they should do. "I think for one thing it would give them some piece of mind. And give them some direction to go. Either get started rebuilding, move forward or make other plans, get out don't invest any more money in something that you can't rebuild and start a life in a different place," said McDowell.

Area Plan Commission Executive Director Sallie Fahey said this bill should not affect the ordinance already in place in Tippecanoe County, which prevents people from building in a flood plain. Fahey is worried this bill could create problems in other counties. "The thing that is of concern to me is the part about allowing persons to rebuild in the floodway. Indiana's been a leader nationally in not allowing that to happen so at a time now when other states are seeing the wisdom in doing that it seems that Indiana might be moving backwards," said Fahey.

McDowell says recent floods affected many homes that normally do not flood he says those people should be allowed to rebuild their home. "Homes that are probably going to be destroyed, probably shouldn't be located there. However other homes that are elevated or out of typical flood hazard areas should not be restricted from being rebuilt," said McDowell.

Senator Hershman says the bill is awaiting its final passage in the general assembly. He says once that happens, all the bill will need is the Governor's signature.

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Herald Journal

'Together Hearts Thrive' for flood relief

Amber Tomlinson

Reporter

Cold winds and rainy weather didn't keep the entertainment of songs and fellowship from warming the hearts of many at the "Together Hearts Thrive" concert at the Best Western/Brandywine complex on Sunday.

The concert, sponsored by the White County Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, was a fund-raiser to benefit the White County Red Cross and the White County Food Pantry that have been impacted financially due to the overwhelming need for help from the communities that have been hit by the area flooding.

Because of the concert more than \$17,000 has been earmarked for the Red Cross and the food pantry. Barb Westfall, who coordinated the event, said the concert was more than she had hoped.

"I initially thought that it would be good to raise \$10,000 and we surpassed that," Westfall said. "I kept hearing from those who attended the concert that it was an afternoon of encouragement and hope, which is even more important than dollars."

Westfall said after the numbers were broken down the food pantry would receive more than \$2,500 and the American Red Cross would receive more than \$14,800. She said those numbers include the money that was matched by Thrivent's Care Abounds in Communities program.

"More donations could be in the mail, so even more money could be raised," she said. "I'm thrilled by the willing hands that made this event possible and for the outreach of the people."

Another person, who was impressed by the event, was Diandre Stone. Stone, who was one of many Red Cross volunteers that attended the event, lives in Bloomington, but has spent numerous hours helping individuals in the Northwest Indiana area that have been affected by the floods.

"I think this is amazing," said Stone, who is a subject matter expert for the Red Cross. "It is amazing to see how this has come together as a community to raise money for the community, as a whole, and the disaster funds. This is a really great experience."

Jill Baughman, executive director of the American Red Cross in Cass and White County, said with the continuing rain and weather, the organization and its volunteers are still working hard.

"We have been so busy that we haven't had time to calculate all the volunteer hours," Baughman said. "With the recent rain we are still in go mode."

Along with the volunteers were flood victims and community leaders, who included Monticello Mayor Jason Thompson, Kent Adams, Jim Davis, White County Commissioner John Heimlich, Brad Gutwein and Greg Bossaer. Leslie Goss, White County Community Foundation director, said the concert was about families coming together to share, support and encourage one another.

"I have had the pleasure of sitting with the Community Foundation and seeing the Red Cross volunteers work," Goss said. "They are exhausted and exuberant and they are there day in and day out 24 hours a day. They have done a tremendous job."

John Westfall, who was the master of the microphone for the concerts, introduced one community leader as the "First Lady of White County" - former-State Senator Katie Wolf.

"During the recent flooding, White County has witnessed over and over again how neighbors have been helping neighbors," Wolf said. "In fact, one Red Cross representative shared that she has never been more proud of our county than she is right now. Flood victims have been more concerned with helping others than receiving help themselves."

Wolf also mentioned the tornado of 1974. She said Monticello and White County "recovered beautifully." "Our cottages and lakes will be just as beautiful as before," she said.

One of the big highlights of the concerts, along with the singing, was when Mary Keever, White County REMC office manager, presented a check to Thrivent. The check was for \$6,000 and was part of the REMC Operation Round-up Program. The program is designed to round-up the bills of the REMC customers to the nearest dollar. The money that is rounded-up is then collected and used to help fund community projects. When the check was presented it helped raise the amount of donations to more than \$10,000.

Musical performances included singing from a men's group of St. James Lutheran Church of Reynolds, Apostle, Harmony Children's Choir, Brad Seward, Amanda Harker and Hannah, Suzanne and Wayne Holmes. Apostle includes the talents of Mike Keever, Cindy Ringer, Laura Smith, Jamie Troyer and Westfall.

Refreshments were served by fourth-grade and fifth-grade students of the Sunday schools at Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church and New Hope Lutheran Church.

To make a donation send checks to Thrivent, care of Barb Westfall, 5749 Indian Creek Road, Monticello, IN 47960.

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Remington town meeting yields helpful information for flood victims

By Dave Ake, dave@rensselaerrepublican.com
Posted: Monday, February 18, 2008 9:25 AM CST

Remington held a town meeting on Tuesday evening in order to share important information directly from local and federal officials in regard to January and February flooding. Because of the large number of officials gathered in the same place, flood victims were also encouraged to ask questions.

In attendance were members of the Remington Town Board, Department of Natural Resources representatives, FEMA personnel, Small Business Administration (SBA) officials, an Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) officer, a Charter One Bank manager and area members of the Indiana Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (INVOAD).

Personnel from each organization made clear to those in attendance, exactly how they can assist flood victims.

Tips were also shared from INVOAD organizations on how to avoid becoming a victim of a scam. Highlights from the speakers were:

Wayne Trent, Justine Young and Coy Carl with FEMA-

- The first step toward recovery is registering with FEMA either by calling 1-800-621-3362 or logging onto www.fema.gov.

- You must apply first and then 2-10 days later an inspector will come to inspect your damage.

- Once you have applied, you will receive a packet in the mail. Inside that packet will be paperwork from SBA. If you don't fill this out or any of the paperwork FEMA sends you, it will stop the process.

- When you apply, you will receive a number. Save this number. It is a registration ID. As long as you have this number anyone you talk to can track progress on your case.

Matt Young with SBA-

- During a disaster SBA provides loans to homeowners, renters and businesses of any size.

-SBA gives low interest loans. The low interest rate for homeowners is 2.9%. The low rate for businesses is 4%.

-The terms of these loans can be for up to 30 years. On a case by case basis, sometimes SBA can re-finance an existing mortgage.

-SBA personnel are on site at the DRC in Remington.

-SBA does not need your insurance settlement to start processing your application.

-The SBA application must be completed to continue the disaster assistance process.

-Even if SBA approves you for a loan, you are not required to take it.

-Loans for homeowners can go up to \$200,000 for the repair and replacement of a structure. Loans are available up to \$200,000 for re-financing of an existing mortgage. For homeowners and renters \$40,000 is available for personal property.

-Loans for businesses are available up to \$1.5 million for physical damages, machinery, equipment and inventory. For small businesses loans for economic injury are available. Economic injury is when a business doesn't have any physical damage, but might not be having any sales coming in. Economic injury loans are used to pay for monthly expenses such as rent, utilities or mortgage.

-SBA can increase loans for mitigation purpose in order to prevent damages should a disaster occur again.

Randy Sparks with Remington First Christian Church and INVOADS-

-It is not a huge issue now, but when it warms up a big issue is going to be mold. Even people who did not have any water damage to their home might experience mold from the flooding. Don't take this situation lightly

-INVOAD can assist you in three areas: case management, finance and construction.

-Investigate your contractors. Ask for references and check their work. The amount of assistance money available may attract questionable contractors.

Dan Nave of Heritage Bible Church and INVOADS-

-The Remington Disaster Relief Fund took in \$49,390.57

-\$31,039 of the Remington Disaster Relief Fund has been disbursed for disaster relief.

-71 families have been helped by the Remington Disaster Relief Fund.

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